

Message Text

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ACTION IO-03

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 CU-02 INR-05 CIAE-00 USIA-01

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R 101038Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8671

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 07123

LIMDIS NESCO

E.O. 11652: XGDS

TAGS: PORG, UNESCO, XG

SUBJECT: UNESCO-ISRAELI CONTACTS ON JERUSALEM EXCA-
VATIONS ISSUE, BELGIAN PRODDING OF GOI FOR
MORE CONCILIATORY STANCE.

1. ISRAELI DEPUTY PERMREP TO UNESCO (JOFFE) AND THE
BELGIAN AMBASSADOR TO UNESCO (VAN USSEL) HAVE INFORMED
PERMDEL OF SEPARATE, BUT POSSIBLY RELATED, DEVELOP-
MENTS AND EXCHANGES CONCERNING THE UNESCO-ISRAEL IM-
PASSE WITH PARTICULAR FOCUS ON THE JERUSALEM EXCAVA-
TIONS ISSUE.

2. JOFFE ADVISED DELOFF THAT A LETTER "RECENTLY"
RECEIVED BY UNESCO DIRECTOR GENERAL M'BOW FROM GOI
FOREIGN MINISTER ALLON RAISES THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE
GOI WILL PROVIDE FURTHER INFORMATION -- LIKELY AN
UP-DATING -- ON THE STATUS OF THE EXCAVATIONS. THE
ISRAELIS HERE APPARENTLY HAVE ALSO RENEWED PREVIOUSLY
STALEMATED DISCUSSIONS ON THE POSSIBILITY OF A VISIT
BY A HIGH-RANKING UNESCO SECRETARIAT OFFICIAL --
POSSIBLY THE NEW ASSISTANT DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR
ADMINISTRATION (REGUAD, FRENCH) -- TO VISIT ISRAEL AND
DISCUSS THE UNESCO-ISRAEL DISPUTE. MOREOVER, ACCORDING
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TO JOFFE, THERE HAVE BEEN FURTHER CONTACTS ON THE

POSSIBILITY OF ANOTHER VISIT TO JERUSALEM BY PROFESSOR LEMAIRE, THE BELGIAN ARCHEOLOGICAL EXPERT WHO HAS PREVIOUSLY SERVED AS A UNESCO CONSULTANT IN REPORTING ON THE EXCAVATIONS.

3. HOWEVER, JOFFE WAS CAREFUL TO EMPHASIZE THAT THE GOI WILL CONTINUE TO ABSTAIN FROM ANY ACTION THAT MIGHT BE INTERPRETED AS COMPLIANCE WITH THE UNESCO 18TH GENERAL CONFERENCE RESOLUTION SANCTIONING THE JERUSALEM EXCAVATIONS. INDEED, JOFFE INDICATED THAT ISRAELI SENSITIVITIES ON THIS ISSUE ARE SUCH THAT THE GOI IS NOT YET PREPARED TO ADMIT LEMAIRE ON HIS UN TRAVEL DOCUMENT AND WOULD PREFER THAT HE COME IN ON A TOURIST VISA IN HIS BELGIAN PASSPORT.

4. NEVERTHELESS, JOFFE IMPLIED THAT THE GOI MAY BE CONSIDERING A MODIFICATION OF ITS HARD-LINE STANCE TOWARDS UNESCO.

5. A POSSIBLY RELATED DEVELOPMENT WAS THE INFORMATION OF BELGIAN AMBASSADOR TO UNESCO, MICHEL VAN USSEL, THAT ABOUT TWO WEEKS AGO THE BELGIAN AMBASSADOR TO ISRAEL MADE A DEMARCHE TO PREMIER RABIN AND FOREIGN MINISTER ALLON URGING A MORE CONCILIATORY GOI STANCE TOWARDS UNESCO ON THE EXCAVATIONS ISSUE.

6. ACCORDING TO VAN USSEL, THE BELGIANS MADE CLEAR THEIR FEELING THAT WHILE BELGIUM AND OTHER WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES CONTINUE THEIR DIPLOMATIC SUPPORT

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 2 PARIS 07123

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FOR ISRAEL ON MANY FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES, THIS DID NOT
EXTEND TO UNRESERVED BACKING FOR ISRAELI POLICIES AND
ACTIONS IN JERUSALEM; A HOLY SITE FOR CHRISTIANS AS
WELL AS JEWS AND MOSLEMS. VAN USSEL INDICATED THAT
THE BELGIAN DEMARCHE URGED SOME TYPE OF CONCILIATORY
ISRAELI GESTURE BE MADE; REFLECTIVE OF WHAT COULD
THEREAFTER BE POINTED TO AS EVIDENCE OF A
CONSTRUCTIVE ISRAELI ATTITUDE.

7. INTERESTINGLY, THE BELGIANS HAD THE IMPRESSION
RABIN WAS TOTALLY UNFAMILIAR WITH THE GENERAL ISSUES
INVOLVED IN THE UNESCO-ISRAEL DISPUTE AND THAT ALLON
HAD ONLY A VERY GENERAL KNOWLEDGE OF THESE.

8. COMMENT: THE DEVELOPMENTS MAY SIGNAL RENEWED
ISRAELI ATTENTION AND POSSIBLY FOR THE FIRST TIME AT
A HIGH POLICY-MAKING LEVEL TO AN IMPASSE THAT HAS
ENDURED SINCE THE NOVEMBER 1974 GENERAL CONFERENCE
OF UNESCO. IT MAY INDICATE SOME AWARENESS THAT SINCE
US WILL NOT HAVE RIGHT TO VOTE AT NAIROBI GENERAL
CONFERENCE, ISRAEL, WITH FULL VOTING RIGHTS, WILL BE
WITHOUT THE ONLY SUPPORTING VOTE IT CAN REALLY COUNT
UPON WHEN KEY ISSUES COME UP FOR CONSIDERATION.

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